

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MANAGU 04288 122051Z
ACTION ARA-15

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 MCT-02 SSO-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00
DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-02
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FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7771
NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE IMMEDIATE
INFO USICA WASHDC
AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
AMEMBASSY PANAMA
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
USSOUTHCOM QUARRY HTS, CANAL ZONE PRIORITY

UNCLAS MANAGUA 4288

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINS, PINT, MOPS, XK, CS, NU
SUBJECT: SOMOZA PRESS CONFERENCE: 12 SEPTEMBER

SUMMARY: SOMOZA HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE ON 12 SEPTEMBER
WHICH CONTINUES AS THIS REPORT IS BEING WRITTEN. FULL DETAILS
TO BE REPORTED SEPTEL. IN COURSE OF PRESS CONFERENCE THUS FAR,
SOMOZA STATED THAT MOST OF COUNTRY UNDER FULL CONTROL AND BALANCE
SOON WILL BE. SOMOZA ALSO REPORTED THAT AN ATTACK ORIGINATING IN
COSTA RICA HAD BEEN REPELLED AND DID NOT DISMISS THE POSSIBILITY
THAT THE GN MIGHT CROSS THE BORDER IN PURSUIT. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING SOMOZA'S OPENING REMARKS, HE STATED THAT THE SITUATION
IN NICARAGUA WAS RAPIDLY COMING UNDER COMPLETE GN CONTROL. LEON,
HE SAID, WAS UNDER CONTROL EXCEPT FOR A FEW POCKETS WHERE SNIPERS
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CONTINUED TO BE ACTIVE. MASAYA HAD BEEN RETAKEN. IN ESTELI,
THE CENTER OF TOWN HAS BEEN REOCCUPIED AND OTHER AREAS ARE BEING
RETAKEN. SOMOZA EXPECTED CHINANDEGA TO BE UNDER CONTROL EITHER
TODAY OR TOMORROW. ALL OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY ARE TRANQUIL,
HE SAID.

2. EARLIER TODAY, HE SAID, AN ARMED GROUP

OF 50 MEN INVADDED NICARAGUA ACROSS THE COSTA RICAN BORDER AND WERE REPULSED BY THE GN. THE INVADERS ARE RETREATING TOWARD COSTA RICA AND THE GN IS IN PURSUIT. SOMOZA SAID THAT, ACCORDING TO INTERNATIONAL LAW, WHEN THERE WAS A FIGHT ALONG A BORDER, TROOP COULD PURSUE ATTACKERS ACROSS IT AND THAT "WE MIGHT DO IT". POOR TRANSMISSION IMPEDED MONITERING OF CASUALTY COUNT, BUT EMB HAS INDICATIONS THAT GN MAY HAVE TAKEN SUBSTANTIAL CASUALTIES.

3. DURING THE FIRST PART OF Q & A, SOMOZA ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE RED CROSS HAD BEEN DENIED ENTRY INTO SCENES OF DISORDER. NOW, HOWEVER, THEY WOULD BE PERMITTED TO ENTER THESE AREAS TO TREAT WOUNDED AND REMOVE DEAD BODIES. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION, SOMOZA SAID THAT NICARAGUA HAD NO PLANS TO INVOKE ASSISTANCE OF OTHER CENTRAL AMERICAN NATIONS (AS PROVIDED BY TREATY,) BUT WOULD DEMAND THAT COSTA RICA EXERCISE BETTER VIGILANCE OVER ITS BORDER WITH NICARAGUA. SOMOZA DREW A PARALLEL TO THE 1968 TETF OFFENSIVE AND OPINED THAT MOP-UP OPERATIONS MIGHT REQUIRE A WEEK.

4. SOMOZA STATED THAT THE CARAZO INITIATIVE HAD FAILED WHEN IT BECAME APPARENT TO OTHER CENTRAL AMERICAN LEADERS THAT THE ACTION PROPOSED WAS INTERVENTION. SOMOZA ADDED THAT HE REMAINED WILLING TO NEGOTIATE WITH OPPOSITION LEADERS AND MENTIONED THE TYPE OF GROUP WITH WHICH HE WOULD MEET.

5. COMMENT: EMB HAS RECEIVED UNCONFIRMED REPORT THAT GN ELEMENTS UNCLASSIFIED

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MAY HAVE CROSSED COSTA RICAN BORDER IN PURSUIT OF INVADERS AND, IN NOT DISMISSING SUCH A POSSIBILITY, SOMOZA'S COMMENT IN THE PRESS CONFERENCE ABOUT INTERNATIONAL RIGHT OF HOT PURSUITHMAY HAVE BEEN PUBLICLY PROVIDING JUSTIFICATION FOR THIS ACTION. SOLAUN

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